

Message Text

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43

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5831

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2726

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT, US

SUBJECT: PANORAMA LEAKS EMBASSY DOCUMENTS

REF: ROME 2592

1. AS SIGNALLED IN REFTEL, PANORAMA APPEARED ON NEWSSTANDS FEBRUARY 19 WITH LEAKED EMBASSY DOCUMENTS. REVELATIONS ARE CONTAINED IN TWO CONSECUTIVE ARTICLES, THE FIRST OF WHICH IS A DIRECT PERSONAL ATTACK ON AMBASSADOR VOLPE. DESCRIBED AS "A CATHOLIC HOSTILE TO THE LEFT," THE AMBASSADOR IS ALLEGED TO HAVE ADVOCATED DURING 1973 AND 1974 A RUPTURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS (PSI) AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC). OTHER ALLEGED SINS OF THE AMBASSADOR ARE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH FASCIST AND MAFIA ELEMENTS AS WELL AS WITH FUGITIVE BANKER MICHELE SINDONA. ADDITIONALLY, THE AMBASSADOR IS PICTURED AS THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE CURRENT AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS ITALY, INCLUDING THE "REVITALIZATION OF THE DC", AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS REPORTEDLY RESISTED PRESSURE FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND MAJOR INDUSTRIALISTS TO REPLACE HIM. FINALLY, THE AMBASSADOR REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED BERLINGUER IN NEGATIVE TERMS (REFTEL) IN FEBRUARY 1973--BEFORE THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL IN ROME--BUT THAT HE HAS EVENTUALLY COME AROUND TO THE VIEW THAT BERLINGUER IS "A VERY DANGEROUS OPPONENT." (A CHECK OF OUR FILES HAS REVEALED NO DOCUMENT WRITTEN IN FEBRUARY 1973 WITH ANY SUCH CHARACTERIZATION OF BERLINGUER.)

2. THE SECOND ARTICLE IS WRITTEN BY ROBERTO FAENZA, WHO
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CO-AUTHORED THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK THE AMERICANS IN ITALY.

IN ADDITION TO THE TELEGRAM REFERRED TO IN THE PRE-PUBLICATION SUMMARY (REFTEL), THE ARTICLE QUOTES EXTENSIVELY FROM TWO ADDITIONAL EMBASSY TELEGRAMS, ROME 13449 OF DECEMBER 4, 1973 (CONFIDENTIAL) AND ROME 12133 OF SEPTEMBER 4, 1974 (CONFIDENTIAL). THE QUOTATIONS CONTAINED IN THE PANORAMA STORY REFLECT ACCURATELY THE TEXTS OF THE TELEGRAMS IN QUESTION, LEAVING NO DOUBT THAT FAENZA HAS HAD DIRECT ACCESS TO AT LEAST THREE TELEGRAMS CONTAINING EMBASSY REPORTING ON THE PCI.

3. COMMENT. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE RESEARCH FOR HIS BOOK, FAENZA SPENT SOME TIME IN WASHINGTON GOING THROUGH DOCUMENTS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DOCUMENTS IN QUESTION WERE OBTAINED BY FAENZA EITHER THROUGH HIS RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OR THROUGH RECOURSE TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

4. AS TO THE LEAKED DOCUMENTS, IT IS STILL NOT PRECISELY CLEAR TO US WHY PANORAMA HAS CHOSEN TO USE THEM AS THE BASIS FOR A STORY. THEY ARE CERTAINLY NOT SENSATIONAL, DO NOT CONTAIN THE NAMES OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION (ALTHOUGH TWO INDIRECT REFERENCES ARE FOUND IN THE TELEGRAMS), AND MERELY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE EMBASSY PREPARES PERIODIC ANALYSES ON DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE. CERTAINLY, THE FIRST ARTICLE IS A CHEAP SHOT AIMED AT DISCREDITING THE AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY. AS FOR THE SECOND, THE BEST WE CAN SAY AT THIS POINT IS THAT IT POSSIBLY REFLECTS YET ONE MORE EFFORT TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE PATH OF THE EMBASSY IN CARRYING OUT CONTACTS HERE IN ITALY AS WELL AS TO SHOW HOW POORLY WE UNDERSTAND THE ITALIAN SCENE.

5. WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY COUNTERING THESE UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS AIMED PERSONALLY AT THE AMBASSADOR AND AT THE EMBASSY AND WHICH ARE HARMING AMERICAN INTERESTS

HERE. SUBJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE, WE PROPOSE TO HAVE A BACKGROUND BRIEFING, CONDUCTED BY THE DCM, FOR A GROUP OF SEVEN JOURNALISTS REPRESENTING THE LEADING NON-COMMUNIST DAILIES AND ANSA. WE PROPOSE TO HAVE AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT WHICH WOULD BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO A "SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICIAL" AND WHICH WOULD UNDERLINE THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEW THESE

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MALICIOUS, DISTORTED AND POLITICALLY MOTIVATED STORIES AS TYPIFIED BY THE ARTICLES IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF PANORAMA. WE WOULD SPECIFICALLY CORRECT THE INACCURACIES AND INUNDATES IN THE PANORAMA STORY ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR AND IN OTHER RECENT ARTICLES OF THE SIMILAR NATURE. FINALLY, WE ALSO PROPOSE TO MAKE AVAILABLE FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES COPIES OF THE THREE LEAKED TELEGRAMS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE NOT SENSATIONAL AND TO UNDERSCORE THE DELIBERATELY DISTORTED MANNER IN WHICH PANORAMA HANDLED THEM.

6. THE AMBASSADOR FEELS THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR A MORE
VIGOROUS STANCE TO COUNTER WHAT ARE OBVIOUSLY POLITICALLY
MOTIVATED PRESS STORIES. WE REQUEST YOUR IMMEDIATE GUIDANCE.VOLPE

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